

Core Capabilities of Effective Leaders **Bruce E. Roselle, PhD and Colleen McGinnis, PsyD Candidate**

For a number of years now, leadership theorists and designers of multi-rater feedback instruments have discussed and debated the number and nature of core capabilities that exist in an effective leader. Several have settled on five dimensions or five practices, others have identified as few as two and as many as eight dimensions. Most of these have not provided proof of the validity of the core capabilities they hypothesize exist. Consequently, it is difficult to know if their dimensions reflect real, measurable leader capabilities.

In 2008, Roselle Leadership Strategies, Inc. embarked on a rigorous validation study of the FULLVIEW Feedback Inventory™, a 360-degree instrument developed in 1996. When we first constructed the instrument, we determined through our experience with high performing leaders and our analyses of other multi-rater instruments that there were three fundamental capabilities important in leaders at all levels in an organization. We called these Building Relationships, Solving Problems, and Taking Initiative. Then, we expanded these into 12 competencies, which we measured with 48 behavioral items and 14 sections of anecdotal comments.

Our construct validation study is now complete, and it includes FULLVIEW Feedback Inventory™ results of more than 300 leaders in various organizations. For the purposes of the study, the researcher (second author of this paper, Colleen McGinnis) conducted separate factor analyses for each different perspective. That is, she analyzed Self, Manager, Direct Report, and Peer data individually and searched for the best fit for number of core capability factors. In each case, the researcher ran a factor analysis for two, three, four, and five factor possibilities. The results of this analysis indicated that, in fact, three factors best represented the data clusters across the 48 behavioral items for each perspective (self, manager, direct report, and peer).

Because the correlations of specific behavioral items from the 48 differed somewhat by self, manager, direct report, and peer perspective, the researcher created separate core capability data sets for each. She named them in a way that she felt best captured the content of the items in each set. It makes sense that the items would differ slightly across

these four rater groups, because they each represent a unique perspective on the person they rated. For example, an item like “utilizes a wide range of approaches to persuade people, provide feedback and coaching, show appreciation,” fell into four different core capability categories, reflecting variations across the four perspectives:

- Inspires Others (self perspective)
- Achieves Results (direct report perspective)
- Exhibits Resourcefulness (manager perspective)
- Uses Resources Wisely (peer perspective)

Despite the variability of a few items like this one, however, the results clearly identified three factors across the four distinct rater perspectives. Using the criterion cut-off that at least three of the four rater perspectives must include an item in the same core cluster, the results showed 16 items in one category the researcher named “Achieve Results,” 16 items in a second category she named “Build Relationships,” and 8 in a third category she named “Adaptive Resourcefulness.” The three-factor analysis, then, accounted for 40 of the 48 total items—solid proof that our initial supposition of three core capabilities was valid.

The remaining eight items did not cluster significantly with any of these three core capabilities, but included important behavioral observations like “exhibits a model of healthy life balance and wellness,” “analyzes multiple perspectives before making decisions,” and “recognizes impact of actions on whole system.” Since these eight items did not exhibit a strong statistical relationship to each other, it was clear that they did not represent a fourth distinct leadership capability. One important outcome from this study is that we will revise or replace each of these “miscellaneous” behavioral items to create a better fit with the three core capabilities. All of the items on the revised FULLVIEW instrument (available at the end of 2009), then, will more closely align with these three validated factors of leadership effectiveness.

The results of this factor analytical study illustrate why we are so confident at Roselle Leadership Strategies when using the core competencies of the FULLVIEW Feedback Inventory™ in our Development Assessments, our Good Managers to Great Leaders™ workshop series, and our executive coaching engagements. These three core capabilities are the most foundational and critical to leader success across multiple levels in any organization. We have started to describe these three capabilities as the “Three R’s of Leadership” because they focus on

- Relationships
- Results
- Resourcefulness

In our third and final white paper related to 360-degree, multi-rater feedback, we will give you ideas about how to use the three core capabilities in selecting and developing your key leaders. If you missed our white paper from last month, entitled, “360 Feedback—Is It Valid?” we urge you to follow this link to our website, where you can download the material. It provides a great summary of previous research supporting multi-rater assessment:

<http://www.roselleleadership.com/pages/360%20feedback--is%20it%20valid.pdf>

REFERENCES

McGinnis, C. *Factor analysis of the FULLVIEW: A 360-degree feedback instrument for leadership development*, unpublished doctoral dissertation. Minnesota School of Professional Psychology, Eagan, MN (2009).